

# Public Health Service Programs on Aging

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ABOUT \$100 million will be spent during 1964 by the Bureau of State Services for programs benefiting the aging (persons 45-64 years of age) and the aged (persons 65 years of age and older). Ninety percent of these funds will be administered by 2 of its 12 divisions: the Division of Chronic Diseases and the Division of Hospital and Medical Facilities.

In addition the National Institutes of Health reports an annual expenditure of about \$11 million for basic research directly related to aging. The NIH programs are not covered here.

## Division of Chronic Diseases

The Division of Chronic Diseases administers the only programs in the Public Health Service devoted principally to applied gerontology. The programs are operated by the Gerontology Branch and the Nursing Homes and Related Facilities Branch, with activities enhanced by the programs of the care services staff, the preventive services staff, and the four categorical programs in cancer, diabetes and arthritis, heart, and neurological and sensory diseases.

*Gerontology Branch.* The Gerontology Branch in its first year began activities in services, training, research, and information and education.

In the area of services, the branch initiated a pretest of a survey of State and local resources available to meet the health needs of the aging and aged. This survey includes programs of official, voluntary, and private agencies and organizations.

The branch is supporting demonstration projects designed to yield information on new ways of providing out-of-hospital services of all types

for the aging and aged. Included in these projects are services for the well older person and the ambulatory as well as the homebound infirm aged. These projects are based in various settings, such as housing developments, health departments, geriatric centers, and senior citizen centers. The services offered include health education, periodic health examinations, nursing care, social service, information, counseling, and referral services, and a podiatric educational, screening, and referral program.

In addition, the branch is encouraging the use of formula grant funds by States to incorporate into ongoing programs new services developed through the demonstration projects. Among these services are multiple services in the home (nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work, and other related services), coordinated home care programs, homemaker services, meals on wheels, information and referral services, multiple screening, and other supportive services.

After several conferences with academicians and practitioners concerning the need for trained personnel, the branch instituted negotiations for the development of a body of knowledge common to all disciplines working in the field of gerontology. Medical schools and schools of public health, nursing, and social work are being contacted and asked to review present courses of study and to consider the development of courses in gerontology as a specialization within their regular curriculum. State health departments and community hospitals will be approached to consider the use of this material for inservice and continuing education for their respective staffs.

As a beginning for its research program, the branch has contracted to analyze research projects, in terms of the problems investigated, the methodology employed, the research setting, and the success or failure of the project, to help the

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investigator new to gerontological research and to stimulate new or additional research.

The Gerontology Branch gives research grants and currently is supporting or is planning support for projects dealing with prevention of dependency, functional deterioration, attitudinal studies of professional personnel toward older patients, a methodological study on senility, a clinical study of senility, and a longitudinal study to determine the onset of illness, disease, and disability.

The branch has a large exhibit and several portable copies depicting community service programs being promoted. Two films are currently in production—one a historical documentation of community health services for the aging and aged and the other a film on the importance of health maintenance in the 45- to 65-year age group.

The branch also provides consultation on health and health-related matters relevant to the aging and aged to other branches, divisions, bureaus, and agencies within and outside of the Department. Such services have been provided through committee representation on the President's Council on Aging; the Departmental Committee on Aging of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; and the Surgeon General's Committee on Aging. Staff assistance also is available to all State and local health agencies, voluntary agencies, citizens groups, health and medical professions, universities, industry, and private organizations wishing to start programs of ultimate benefit to the health of the aging and aged. The branch is the focal point within the Bureau for all programs related to gerontology.

*Nursing Homes and Related Facilities Branch.* With an average age of 80 years for nursing home patients, virtually the entire Nursing Homes and Related Facilities Branch operation relates directly to gerontology. This program operates primarily in support of State health department and other agency staffs responsible for nursing home standards and training of professional personnel. Recipients of the benefits of this program are the more than 500,000 persons in the nation's 23,000 nursing homes and related facilities.

To test the hypothesis that staffing by State and local health agencies with a full range of

professional competence appropriate to nursing home operations can in itself raise standards and be of measurable benefit to patients, the branch has sponsored the development of a model program in a State health department. Based on experience gained in this project, the branch will stimulate the development of similar projects throughout the country.

Training activities in vital professional areas also are being developed as part of this program. Regional seminars are being conducted to train State personnel responsible for sanitation in nursing homes. In connection with this seminar program, a 21-volume "Syllabus on Environmental Health Factors in Nursing Homes" was produced for training of local inspectors—sanitarians, nurses, and others. Several 6-week summer courses for nursing home administrators have been supported by the branch and now are being continued by the participating universities as part of their regular curriculum.

At the request of the President's Council on Aging, the Nursing Homes and Related Facilities Branch is conducting a nursing home cost study. In another study, the branch is seeking to provide an accurate assessment of the availability of physical therapists.

Eleven affiliation agreements between general hospitals and nursing homes have been initiated by the branch. Through these agreements, the hospital staff members, for a nominal fee, provide professional consultation to nursing home administrators and other personnel.

*Other activities.* Approximately 100 projects relating to care of the long-term patient are under the surveillance of the care services staff. In addition, this staff supports four training centers for instruction on the development and conduct of coordinated home care. The staff has published a report on its survey of coordinated home care programs operating throughout the country and is in the process of developing a standardized reporting system for information and referral services.

The preventive services staff is concerned with the identification of potential programs having to do with minimizing and delaying of chronic diseases and with the reviewing and coordinating of such efforts in this area that are made by the various branches of the division.

Since the incidence of cancer increases with years, most activities of the Cancer Control Branch have some relationship to the aging and aged. Through its grants program, the cancer control program currently supports a wide range of projects for the therapeutic control of cancer. The program is supporting the development of tests and equipment to be used for cancer detection. Research and education continue to be the primary objectives of this program.

Diabetes and arthritis have their greatest impact on the aging and aged. Since 79 percent of all unknown diabetics are 45 years of age and over, a primary goal of the Diabetes and Arthritis Branch is directed toward the finding and bringing to medical attention unsuspected cases. The branch is supporting a community study of obesity and a community epidemiologic study of gout.

Training of personnel to assist States in developing diabetes and arthritis programs is supported by the branch. During the year, a refresher course for general practitioners will be tested, and workshops will be held for dietary counselors.

Inventories and studies are being made on diabetes detection, patient education, arthritis services, and the arthritics' use of physical therapy.

Six of the eight programs of the Heart Disease Control Branch predominately affect the aging and aged. Through these programs for cardiopulmonary diseases, congestive heart failure, coronary heart disease, hypertension, peripheral vascular disease, and stroke, the branch assists State health departments and other agencies in the use of the most effective methods of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart diseases. Research, training, and education are important elements of these programs.

Of special interest to the branch are the cardiocirculatory implications of cardiopulmonary diseases; chronic, nonspecific, respiratory diseases; out-of-hospital care services for patients with congestive heart failure; programs for coordinated community services to provide coordinated home care for coronary heart disease patients; investigations of causative factors in hypertension and its significance as a precursor of coronary and cerebral atherosclerosis; pre-

vention of peripheral vascular disease; and continuing education for physicians on stroke.

The detection and control of glaucoma, which occurs most frequently among persons over 40 years of age, is the responsibility of the Neurological and Sensory Disease Service Branch. Program efforts are directed toward evaluation of the problem, early detection, and lay and professional education.

The branch sponsors screening programs for hearing and has developed a demonstration project to teach lipreading via television lessons. Programs in speech rehabilitation are being supported in three States.

### **Division of Hospital and Medical Facilities**

The Division of Hospital and Medical Facilities has responsibility for the Hill-Burton program, which stimulates the construction of health facilities necessary to provide an efficient and well-coordinated network of services for all persons in need of acute care, long-term care, outpatient care, and rehabilitation. The crucial need among the aging and aged, however, is for long-term care facilities providing skilled nursing services under medical supervision. The Community Health Services and Facilities Act of 1961 doubled the appropriation authorization for construction of nursing homes, raising it from \$10 to \$20 million annually and providing additional funds for demonstration projects to permit some experimental design of these facilities.

To keep pace with the increased number of facilities being constructed, technical and professional consultation and guide materials regarding all aspects of areawide planning, facility planning, design, and construction are made available by the division to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private groups.

Special studies and publications are also undertaken by the division. Recently, the division released a final report, "Characteristics of Nursing Homes," on the national inventory of nursing homes and related facilities. Further analyses are being prepared, which will include a study of the factors affecting the availability of nursing homes and facilities in metropolitan areas and implications for areawide planning. In another study, the division

is collecting data on non-Hill-Burton construction of nursing homes, including information on the number of facilities and beds, ownership, and kind of construction in terms of new construction and alterations or additions to existing facilities. The division is also preparing an annotated bibliography of all available studies relating to long-term patients in general hospitals.

### Other Divisions

The Division of Accident Prevention supports studies that are of direct benefit to the aging and aged; for example, a study of osteoporosis and its relationship to accidental fractures in the elderly and a study on patient accidents in nursing homes.

The division assisted in planning a National Symposium on Driving and the Senior Citizen held in June 1964. It has also assisted the Gerontology Committee of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in developing a brochure, "Free the Added Years From Accidents," which is to be used by local clubs sponsoring accident prevention programs.

Close liaison is maintained by the Division of Accident Prevention with experimental groups in gerontology. Staff assistance is provided other agencies developing materials relating to accidents and the aged.

Activities of the Division of Community Health Services are general and look toward improvement of services to the entire population, including the aged. Some of these activities have particular relevance to the aging, such as the studies being made of hospital use in public assistance medical care programs and international surveys to investigate the levels of physical functioning of older people, the economic status of the elderly, their family structure and social contacts, and their health and retirement patterns. Relevant community demonstration projects sponsored by this division include demonstrations of planned professional followup care for hospital patients, planning for posthospital patient care, and development of a personalized service bureau for the homebound.

Staff studies are being made on drug use and cost, use of insurance for and cost of mental

illness, homemaker services, consumer pricing, and use of medical care by Spanish-American War veterans.

The Division of Dental Public Health and Resources is continuing efforts to improve the oral health status of the aged. Studies by this division have measured the comprehensive dental services to this group and fostered the development of portable dental equipment.

Consultation and technical assistance is being provided to aid State and local health agencies in stimulating community interest in meeting the dental needs of the aged, marshaling local resources, and developing dental service programs for the aged.

Emphasis is currently on training dental students to care for aged patients in the home and institution as well as in the traditional office setting and on the development of new or improved methods and techniques for out-of-hospital community dental services.

The Division of Nursing program includes consultation, studies, research projects, and training directed toward improving the understanding and skills of nurses in the care of the geriatric patient. Because a large proportion of the care of older patients is provided in their homes, the Division of Nursing is particularly concerned with the development of community nursing programs.

A number of research projects sponsored by the division are concerned directly with the problems of aged patients, such as nutrition as an aspect of nursing care, psychosocial needs of elderly outpatients, community nursing services for psychiatric patients, nursing needs of rural ambulant patients, public health nursing for the sick at home, intensive nursing care in acute myocardial infarction, and factors influencing continuity of nursing service.

Demonstration projects, also supported by the Division of Nursing, include extended home nursing care for the chronically ill and aged, a referral plan to continue nursing care for patients discharged from the teaching hospital to their homes, and extra-hospital needs in a retirement area.

The Tuberculosis Control Program and the Influenza Vaccination Program of the Communicable Disease Center are most closely associated with the aging and aged. Research,

services, and professional education are components of the Tuberculosis Control Program. The annual program to provide immunizations for high-risk groups, including persons over 45 years, but particularly persons over 65 years, is the responsibility of the Influenza Vaccination Program.

All programs in the five divisions of the Bureau that pertain to environmental health are for the benefit of persons of all ages. However, in several of these divisions some specific research projects are directly related to the aging process and the aging and aged. For instance, the Division of Air Pollution supports a number of research projects to determine the effects of air pollution on chronic respiratory and chronic nonspecific respiratory diseases, in which there is high prevalence among the aging and aged.

The Division of Environmental Engineering and Food Protection supports a number of projects of direct benefit to the aging and aged, such as the study of the sodium content of drinking water being carried out cooperatively with the National Heart Institute and the Heart Disease Control Branch, Division of Chronic Diseases. In addition, the development of standards for health and safety for mobile homes and mobile home courts, environmental engineering criteria for hospitals and related facilities, and general environmental sanitation and health planning—all of which affect the aging and aged—are the responsibility of this division. Housing for the elderly is of particular interest to this division, and consultation is given in this field to other divisions, agencies, and departments.

Several clinical studies in which age is the most important nonoccupational variable are

being conducted among specific occupational groups by the Division of Occupational Health. Since it is recognized that there is a relationship between the aging process and pulmonary function, hearing, and effects of thermal stress, these studies will be conducted in metal and coal mines, feed mills, asbestos plants, airports, and "hot" industries to determine the health of the workers. This is particularly significant for the aging and aged since two of five persons in the work force are over 45 years of age.

The Division of Occupational Health also promotes health services for workers, particularly for employees in hazardous jobs and for the older worker. These services include periodic as well as pre-employment physical examinations and influenza immunization.

Some of the projects and studies supported by the Division of Radiological Health of importance to the study of the aging process and of ultimate benefit to the aging and aged include relation of age to skeletal effects of X-irradiation, behavioral effects of fetal X-irradiation, effects of irradiation on aging of small animals, and aging and other sequelae of fetal X-irradiation. Through this division, the Public Health Service participates in the defined continuing Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission Program in Japan to study the long-term effects of radiation in humans.

The aging and aged as well as all other persons benefit from the conservation and enhancement of water recreation opportunities provided by programs of the Division of Water Supply and Pollution Control.

The foregoing is a summary of a report compiled by the Bureau of State Services for the Surgeon General's Committee on Aging.

### **World Assembly of Israel Medical Association**

The Sixth World Health Assembly of the Israel Medical Association will be held August 3-13, 1964, in Haifa, Jerusalem, and Tel-Aviv, Israel. The proceedings will include symposiums on viruses and cancer; the results of the modern treatment of breast cancer and malignant lymphoma; and current research in cancer viruses.